action plan to expand trade and economic cooperation. One of the points in the action plan is an Agreement on transit along the 'North-South' Corridor to facilitate transportation via Iran and the Caspian Sea to the Russia Federation. A draft of this Agreement is under discussion.

(b) to (d) The 'North-South' Corridor is expected to reduce the shipment time for the transportation of goods from India to the Russian Federation by 20-30% Besides the delivery time, a saving in cost is also anticipated. Reduction in shipment time and costs could lead to an increase in the trade turnover between India and the Russian Federation.

Visit of Australian Prime Minister to India

2084. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Australian Prime Minister during his recent visit to India indicated that his Government was willing to lift sanctions imposed on non-humanitarian assistance after the Pokhran blasts;

(b) whether the Australian Prime Minister also assured of re-establishment of defence cooperation between the two countries; and

(c) which are the other countries, including Japan who are likely to lift similar sanctions imposed on India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) The Australian Foreign Minister on his return to Australia after a visit to India in March 2000, announced the Australian Government's decision to remove the restrictions which it had imposed on non-humanitarian aid to India after India's nuclear tests in May 1998. The matter did not come up for discussions during the visits of the Prime Minister of Australia to India in July 2000.

(b) Resumption of defence relations between India and Australia was agreed upon in principle during the visit of the Australian Foreign Minister of India in March 2000. The matter was not discussed during the Australian Prime Minister's visit to India subsequently.

(c) The US Government has progressively lifted some of the

restrictive economic measures which it had imposed on India after May 1998.

Proposal to combat terrorism by India and Russia

2085. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and Russia proposed to combat global terrorism jointly;

(b) if so, the details of working group formed for this purpose; and

(c) when the proposals are likely to be finalised?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) The issue of international terrorism has been among the subject of discussion between India and the Russian Federation at the highest level as also Ministerial and other levels. Both India and the Russian Federation are committed to take joint action to eliminate this menace.

(b) and (c) The Protocol of Cooperation between the National Security Council of India and the Security Council of the Russian Federation, signed in New Delhi in April 2000, envisages the formation of a Joint Coordination Group to enhance mutual cooperation in combating international terrorism. Modalities on the setting up of the Joint Coordination Group are under discussion.

Sanctions against India after Pokhran tests

2086. SHRI SWARAJ KAUSHAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the names of countries who continue to employ/enforce sanctions against India after the Pokhran test;

(b) the nature of such sanctions by each country;

(c) what is the impact of such sanctions on economy trade and other areas; and

(d) what steps has the Government have taken against the countries who continue to enforce such sanctions?

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